

VZCZCXRO1418
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #0862 1330709
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 120709Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2816
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0227
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 9198
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 000862

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA
ENERGY FOR GEORGE PERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [CVIS](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NEW PDP CHAIR MEETS DIPLOMATS

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Heather Merritt for reasons 1
.4. (b & d).

11. (SBU) The new leadership and National Working Committee (NWC) of Nigeria's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) held an "interactive session" with the diplomatic corps in Abuja on May 8. The party's National Chairman Vincent Ogbulafor called for stability, reconciliation, and anti-corruption efforts, which he suggested would lead to peace and stability and, in turn, investment in Nigeria. "We would like to transact with your country, your businessmen," Ogbulafor said. "Help us exploit our abundant mineral resources." PDP leaders asked the assembled diplomats from approximately 30 missions for greater economic, social and political interaction, and less stringent visa regulations for Nigerians, even offering to provide letters of guaranty from the party for visas. (Note: To the amusement of the US and UK representatives, Canada was the lone mission singled out by name for criticism by Ogbulafor, whose son has been accepted to a Canadian university. "Despite the fact that I've paid two years worth of school fees in advance -- 60,000 dollars -- after weeks he still doesn't have a visa." End note.)

12. (SBU) Several envoys used the meeting to complain about increased crime and insecurity in Nigeria. They called upon the ruling party and government to improve security and infrastructure deficiencies nationwide, especially in the Niger Delta. In response, National Organizing Secretary Prince Uche Secondus, who hails from a Rivers State community near Bonny Terminal, asked the diplomats to help with infrastructure and manpower development, additional police equipment to attack Delta "criminality," and assistance in stemming the flow of illegal weapons. (Note: Through the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy process, the USG has made repeated offers to provide the GON with technical assistance in stemming the flow of small arms/light weapons. The GON has not yet accepted our offers. End note.)

13. (U) National Women's Leader Hajia Inna Ciroma discussed the NWC's desire to enshrine in the Nigerian Constitution, not just party bylaws, the PDP's affirmative action program whereby 30 percent of elected and appointed positions are reserved for women. To further encourage the participation of female candidates, the party is pledging to waive the five million naira (USD 42,500) candidacy fee for women seeking office on the PDP ticket. (Note: Women have previously paid reduced fees of around 3,000 naira (USD 26), though PolOffs have received reports of female candidates being asked to

step aside for men.)

¶4. (SBU) In response to a question by the Iranian Ambassador about greater interaction with fellow developing countries, the National Secretary Abubakar Baraje noted a recent trip to China by PDP Deputy National Chairman Mohammed, and expressed a desire for more cooperation with other emerging economies, especially in Asia. Ogbulafor readily acknowledged a commercial memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Communist Party, and held it forth as a model for other countries. Mohammed also announced that the PDP plans to conduct workshops and seminars for other political parties "in Africa and Europe."

¶5. (C) Comment: This event was the ruling party's first attempt to introduce its new leadership, selected by "consensus" at its March 2008 convention, to the diplomatic corps. Not surprisingly, given the lack of internal democracy within the PDP, the meeting's focus was on how the international community should help Nigeria develop economically, rather than how the ruling party will work to encourage democracy and rule of law or improve security in Nigeria. Mission will continue its engagement with the PDP. We will also encourage more contact and possible exchanges between the PDP and American political parties to continue to encourage Nigeria's democratic development. End comment.
SANDERS